



"Science knows no country,
because knowledge belongs to humanity,
and is the torch which illuminates the world."

Louis Pasteur

Dear colleagues,

New academic hiring season started at HSE. Job calls were advertised in September and the first fly-outs took place on the last week of October at the Faculty of Management. They are just the very first ones in a row of on-campus interviews. HSE is actively recruiting tenure-track and post-doctoral academic staff in 15 disciplines for the 2014-15 academic year. Being a relatively new hirer on the international academic market, HSE has already become a principal one in Russia. New faculty play crucial role in achieving HSE's goal of becoming internationally-recognized research university and we believe this matter is worth a special issue.

Carsten Sprenger, Assistant Professor at International College of Economics and Finance and the Head of International Laboratory of Financial Economics, who was among the first full-time academics hired from outside Russia, has kindly shared his experience and ideas about the further hiring policy development.

The Center for Advanced Studies, a separate unit responsible for all aspects of international recruitment, headed by Prof. Martin Gilman, have unveiled short though rather dramatic story of attracting scholars from world's prominent research universities.

We are a university focused primarily on research, though the impassioned teaching and effective mentoring is an integral part of the jobs with HSE. We are proud to announce HSE's partnership with Coursera: 12 online courses were developed.

Not bad for the beginning, isn't it?

Yulia Grinkevich

Director for International Academic Integration

International Faculty Recruitment

Hiring new academic faculty from the international job market at HSE has been an evolutionary process that recently has expanded greatly. From its modest beginnings in 2005 as an initiative of HSE's International College of Economics and Finance (ICEF) with our partners from the London School of Economics as the driver, HSE currently employs some 53 international tenure-track and post-doctoral fellows spread across 10 faculties and 6 research labs and centers in Moscow and at HSE campuses in St. Petersburg and Perm.

The Beginnings of International Recruitment

International recruitment at HSE involves attracting world-class scholars from recognized international research universities able to produce original research in their respective disciplines and, by doing so, contribute to raising HSE to the highest standards of academic excellence.

The original impulse to hire academics from the international market belongs to HSE's Rector Yaroslav Kuzminov and the university's founder, Evgeny Yasin, after receiving the results of an OECD study they had commissioned in 2004. The Rector emphasizes that a transformation needs to be made in order to reach the standards of a world-class university: "Today we have to make major changes to our structure and our work. We've been successful on a national level, but the global market sets the bar much higher." The OECD recommended internationalising our university and bringing it to the level of top academic institutions around the world. HSE's goal is ambitious: to attract successful researchers with international academic backgrounds and publication track records in top peer-reviewed journals as full-time tenure-track faculty members.

The Recruitment Process in General

It was recognized early on that the typical recruitment model used in most of the top research universities in Europe or North America could not be readily applied at HSE. In those schools the university generally operates in a decentralized manner, with most decisions about hiring and promotions left

to academic faculty in their various departments that have their own autonomous budgets. Thus, when a new recruitment round begins at most Western universities, it is usually the department heads and senior academic staff whose creativity is tested in stretching the budget and using their fair judgment abilities. At HSE the situation is quite different.

At HSE, like at many older Russian universities, departments traditionally tended to place teaching needs ahead of research. Methodology and approaches adopted by the best research universities were generally unknown or even ignored by many Russian-trained academics, especially in the social sciences, which were so adversely impacted during Soviet times. Although there were some notable exceptions in some HSE departments, it was recognized that for the time being, a centrally-coordinated process would be needed to ensure transparency and quality control at all stages of the recruitment process. Thus HSE's Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) was created in 2006. CAS is the coordinating body for all aspects of international recruitment. It works under the authority of the Recruitment Policy Committee, chaired by Vadim Radaev.

It should be noted that centralized international hiring is not the only method to bring academic staff with international training or even foreign PhDs to HSE. Each academic structure in the university has its own budget for hiring staff under domestic contracts. In many circumstances and for various reasons many academic staff have been hired under domestic contracts directly. Currently there are about 80 such staff at HSE on a full-time basis plus a considerable number who teach or visit HSE on a part-time basis.

From Ad Hoc Process to Official Procedures

All of this is more than just a complex administrative process. It is about the art of combining the needs of the departments with the ambitious goals of the university while maintaining some balance between the existing faculty and new hires. Add in the creation of a working environment with a healthy, friendly atmosphere of cooperation and a space for research collaboration and you start to see the full picture. Using English as the main language has also been a challenge in adapting HSE's administrative support to the emerging needs of a diversified and increasing international academic staff, many of whom speak little or no Russian.

However, by moving from an ad hoc to a more institutionalized approach to international recruitment, HSE has been able to attract new talent to the university. Konstantin Sonin and Sergey Erofeev, HSE's newly appointed Vice Rectors, coordinate the international sector. Konstantin Sonin manages the process of searching for and the hiring of academic staff, while Sergey Erofeev focuses on the integration process. Their work is supported by the departments of human resources, finance, strategic development and planning, and innovation infrastructure, overseen by Vice Rector Alexey Novoseltsev.

The hiring of new faculty from abroad is very important and the integration of these newcomers into an unfamiliar professional environment is a huge challenge. Faculty coordinators positions have been created expressly for the purpose of helping new faculty better adapt. These professionals are trained to help internationally recruited hires directly in their departments in the process of getting to know their working environment and to get involved in the life of the university. The Department for International Academic Integration, headed by Yulia Grinkevich, helps these faculty coordinators in integrating new hires and by serving as a central support office.

The Centre for Advanced Studies (CAS), headed by Professor Martin Gilman, has been in operation for 8 years. It was created to work as a liaison between HSE and new international hires. Today it cooperates with 15 faculties on hiring from the international job market. CAS regulates all the main hiring procedures involving coordination activities of internal and external experts under the search and selection committees in each discipline. External members are always widely published tenured faculty at major international research universities. Internal members of the committee must have a PhD from an international research university and/or significant publications in international peer-reviewed journals and university presses. The search committees must reach a unanimous agreement on each applicant that they filter, which helps guarantee high academic standards for all internationally-hired staff.

This year's recruitment process has also heavily involved our recent international hires. These junior professors are our foremost experts whose advice and suggestions are highly valued.

New Job Ads for International Candidates

After some initial success of hiring tenure-track faculty in ICEF, HSE was able to attract internationally recognised research specialists to the Faculty of Economics. Four years ago the process was expanded to the fields of Sociology, Management, and most recently to Politics. For the academic year 2012-13 HSE was able to hire researchers in an ever-expanding number of disciplines, such as Philosophy, History, Media, Psychology, and International Affairs.

This fall HSE has embarked on a new aspiring round of recruitment. CAS's hiring efforts have been expanded into 15 disciplines, now including Statistics and Applied Mathematics among others. Since October CAS has also been working with such new departments in international recruitment as Education, Law, Public Policy and Administration and Mathematics.

HSE's academic hunt for post-doctoral researchers began 2 years ago with three fellows in Sociology. For the current academic year, HSE has hired 8 post-doctoral fellows attached to 6 research labs and centres under 10-months contracts. In a few months' time we will begin a recruitment round to fill post-doctoral positions.

Long-Term Plans

Over the past seven years HSE has been systematically recruiting full-time tenure-track academic staff from the international market. Clearly, the procedures have changed significantly over the years, with the administrative side of the process constantly improving and adapting. CAS provides international hires with generous research support including travel grants and other services.

It is hoped that with time, as at major research universities, HSE will be able to decentralize its recruitment activities, including the international aspects, to the individual academic departments. This presumably will happen when internationally recruited staff form a critical mass of academics in those departments. Then CAS can cease its activities as a recruitment coordinator.

Through the efforts of CAS staff and the help of our international hires HSE vacancies are now live on most professional websites in various disciplines, as well as being circulated through mailing lists specific to each separate academic field. We welcome anyone that is interested to participate in the international recruitment process either by applying or by spreading the word. It would be greatly appreciated if you could share information about the new HSE's academic job ads through your personal network of professional contacts as well as informal channels such as web 2.0. All current HSE vacancies are available at the CAS site at www.cas.hse.ru.

Text by the Center for Advanced Studies

“Time has come to start hiring senior professors”

Carsten Sprenger, Assistant Professor at the International College of Economics and Finance and the Head of the International Laboratory of Financial Economics, speaks about academic life at HSE as well as brings some current issues to the spotlight. We'd like to thank Carsten for sharing his experience with The HSE Look.

You have worked in HSE for six years already. How can you describe your experience?

I was among the first full-time academics that were hired by International College of Economics and Finance. Over the last six years ICEF has made a great progress from being a pure teaching college to an institute which tries to integrate both research and teaching at high international standards. I see it as a kind of pilot project within HSE where, with the help of our partners from the

London School of Economics, best international approaches to the organization of research, teaching, hiring etc. can be tested on Russian ground. Overall, I feel very comfortable working at ICEF. I appreciate the good atmosphere among colleagues and the attention of our administration to the needs of faculty members to be productive in their research. Speaking about myself, during the first and the second year in HSE I was very busy with teaching because I had to create all my courses from scratch. Only after almost two years I could concentrate properly on my research. HSE as a whole has also progressed a lot over the last six years that I am here. Nevertheless, I cannot get used to some elements of the internal organization of the school. One is the security system with tourniquets, passes and guards who too often lack elementary rules of civility. Problems start if you forget your pass, want to bring a guest or enter with a non-standard vehicle such as a bicycle. Another problem is that social security coverage (pension and health insurance) of HSE employees, in particular the ones with foreign citizenship, is far below international standards. I think this really runs counter to the ambitious goals to hire many new professors at the international job market.

Is ICEF or HSE as a whole a good place for research?

Everyone is aware that Moscow is not yet one of the centers of economic research in the world or even in Europe. But there are good conditions that HSE could become one. I can see that there is a stronger recognition of the importance of research at international standards now than a few years ago. For example, there is a growing understanding that active research work is impossible with heavy teaching loads that are typical at Russian universities. HSE is also in an excellent position what concerns electronic bibliographic databases and we have achieved that many of the databases that are necessary for empirical research in economics and finance are available now at HSE. We need to make efforts to bring more internationally recognized scholars to work here. This is one of the main aims of the International Laboratory of Financial Economics. We organize the annual International Moscow Finance Conference and invite world-class researchers to Moscow. Our third conference is going to take place on November 8 and 9 at HSE's Shabolovka campus. This is one way to establish working contacts with top researchers and to make our institute more visible within the scientific community. When I talk to people at international conferences and mention my affiliation they rarely know about the Higher School of Economics.

What do you think can be done to change this?

There is currently a lot of effort made to establish HSE as an internationally recognized research university. But currently I see the main focus in all these efforts in publicity, PR. For example, the school has managed to become highly ranked in some social science research databases. But this is not an indicator that people would necessarily look at.

I think bigger efforts should be made to hire more good internationally known researchers either as temporary visiting professors or even for permanent positions. If there is a long-term commitment to create good conditions for research and to produce graduates who have good perspectives in the labor market higher positions in the university rankings will come along. The main indicator is the publication record in the best (and therefore visible) international journals. But this takes time. Demanding a certain number of publications every year only leads to low quality output.

What are the ways to increase the number of publications within HSE?

After many years of hiring fresh PhDs from international market the time has come to start hiring senior people, which is much more difficult. They are not so mobile, they usually have good jobs already but still it is very important. HSE can offer good salaries, provide the conditions for research, and there are smart students to work with. People might come sometimes for personal reasons or simply because they love Russian culture. Just bringing one excellent scholar can make a great impact because he or she brings all his or her personal network. The international research laboratory created at HSE can be a tool for this.

What are your main research projects right now?

My fields of interest are quite broad but mostly I'm working in corporate finance. In particular I'm interested in how the ownership structure of companies affects their operations and their performance. Currently I'm looking at the results of nationalization in Russia, comparing the acquired companies' performance before and after. There are areas where economists could learn from Russian data – it is a market with many imperfections, rapidly changing institutions, and there is quite a bit of variation across the many Russian regions.

If you have a chance to do only research without teaching, will you agree?

Most of us would do that but after some time you would miss students and communication with young people and their fresh ideas. So I think Alexander von Humboldt had a point when he wanted to combine both research and teaching within the university. That idea has turned out to be quite fruitful. Nevertheless, I think that there should be a possibility for successful researchers to lower their teaching load. Unfortunately, the university is not very flexible in this respect currently.

What are your plans?

I am not somebody who makes any long-term plans. ICEF/HSE is a very exciting place to work. The academic life here is intriguing and I feel that I am a part of it.

HSE ON COURSERA

HSE is now a partner of Coursera, one of the world's leading and comprehensive open online course (MOOC) platforms. Students from all over the world will now have free access to educational courses delivered by HSE professors. One of HSE's most popular courses is a class in intercultural communication – Understanding Russians: Contexts of Intercultural Communication. It was specifically designed for international audiences interested in Russia.

“Russian students are among Coursera's top twenty most active users, and the Russian-speaking audience is increasingly interested in free distance learning”, says HSE Vice Rector Sergey Roschin. “Today, our university offers a number of basic economics courses as well as courses in applied mathematics, psychology, and courses at the intersection of these disciplines designed by our leading professors. In addition, we have developed two specialist courses beyond the core program. One of them teaches how to use the LaTeX publishing system, the main platform for getting your paper published in international scholarly peer-reviewed journals, and the other one in intercultural communication with Russians for international audiences interested in Russia. We plan to add courses in the future and to offer more of them in English”.

Coursera carefully selects its partner universities: they should rank among the best in their countries (as reflected in global rankings) and they must be approved by the Coursera Advisory Board of Professors from leading universities. At the moment, HSE offers twelve courses on its Coursera page. Thus, HSE takes the lead among all Russia's universities represented on the platform in terms of the number of courses offered. The page will be regularly updated with new courses from HSE.

For more information check www.coursera.org/